

EPA Fines NYC College

for Hazardous Waste Violations

Manhattan College, Bronx, NY, faces \$111,199 in fines from the EPA for alleged violations of hazardous waste regulations.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as part of its ongoing efforts to ensure environmental compliance by institutions of higher learning, has issued an enforcement action against Manhattan College alleging violations of federal and New York State laws that provide for identification, storage, treatment and disposal of hazardous wastes.

The hazardous waste includes mercury, arsenic, spent solvents and paint, used fluorescent light bulbs, used computer monitors and other wastes generated in the Manhattan College print shop, labs and maintenance facilities at its Bronx campus.

“Manhattan College handles a range of hazardous substances in its educational and maintenance facilities and has failed to follow regulations written to protect the public health and the environment from the potential dangers of hazardous wastes that result from these everyday activities,” said Jane M. Kenny, EPA regional administrator. “The college is now working to correct these violations and prevent their re-occurrence in the future.”

The civil complaint charges Manhattan College with three violations of the Federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, which ensures that hazardous waste is managed from “cradle to grave” in an environmentally sound manner.

The complaint alleges that Manhattan College:

- Failed to determine whether certain solid waste it generated constituted hazardous waste;
- Stored hazardous waste without obtaining permits or interim status; and
- Failed to respond as directed to two information request letters sent by EPA.

The compliance order requires Manhattan College to determine the extent of hazardous waste generation on its campuses, resolve its hazardous waste permit violations, and comply with all pertinent regulations, including development of practices that ensure the safety and protection of students and staff.

In 1999, the EPA started the Colleges and Universities Initiative because it found that many such institutions were not aware of their responsibilities under various environmental laws. As part of the initiative, EPA instituted its Voluntary Audit Policy, under which facilities can investigate and disclose violations to EPA and, if the necessary conditions are met, receive a partial or complete reduction in financial penalties.